

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5110

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 1467

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR GR OTRA (MOLINA, ADOLFO)
SUBJECT: GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINSITER'S APPOINTMENT WITH THE
SECRETARY - 5:00 P.M. MONDAY, MARCH 14

REF: GUATEMALA 933

1. APPOINTMENT IS AT GOG REQUEST AND WE BELIEVE FOREIGN
MINISTER MOLINA MAY RAISE FOLLOWING TOPICS.

2. A. BELIZE. GUATEMALA'S DISPUTE WITH UK OVER BELIZE IS BY
FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT FOREIGN POLICY ISSUE FOR GUATEMALA.
IT IS THE ONLY INTERNATIONAL ISSUE WHICH IN GUATEMALAN EYES
COULD THREATEN THE SECURITY AND STABILITY OF GUATEMALAN
GOVERNMENT, THE LATTER THROUGH DECLARATION OF BELIZEAN
INDEPENDENCE TO WHICH GOG DID NOT REACT WITH SUFFICIENT VIGOR
AND PROMPTNESS, AND THE FORMER THROUGH GROWTH OF CUBAN OR
OTHER COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN BELIZEAN GOVERNMENT. FOREIGN
MINISTER TOLD AMBASSADOR PURPOSE OF HIS CALL ON SECRETARY WAS
TO BRIEF THE SECRETARY ON THE DISPUTE AND WE BELIEVE CHANCES
ARE HE WILL NOT GO BEYOND THAT. HOWEVER, GUATEMALA HAS ON
MANY OCCASIONS SOUGHT US MEDIATION. IN 1965, USG
NAMED NEW YORK LAWYER BETHUEL WEBSTER AS MEDIATOR BUT
HIS EFFORTS CAME TO NAUGHT. IN 1975-1976, GOG REPEATEDLY
HINTED THAT IT WOULD WELCOME PERSONALIMEDIATION BY
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SECRETARY KISSINGER. JUST LAST WEEK GOG QUIETLY AGREED
TO EFFORTS BY OAS SECRETARY GENERAL ORFILA TO FIND A
SOLUTION. SO IT IS POSSIBLE THAT MOLINA MIGHT ONCE AGAIN STATE
THAT GOG WOULD WELCOME SOME FORM OF US MEDIATION OR
GOOD OFFICES.

B. SUGGESTED RESPONSE: ANY FORMAL USG INVOLVEMENT
AT THIS TIME WOULD SERVE NO USEFUL PURPOSE. WE UNDER-

STAND IMPORTANCE OF THIS ISSUE TO GUATEMALA AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO URGE BOTH SIDES TO SEEK A PEACEFUL, NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, WE WILL CONTINUE TO BE HELPFUL BEHIND THE SCENES WHEN SUITABLE OCCASIONS ARISE.

3. A. HUMAN RIGHTS. BECAUSE FOREIGN MINISTER KNOWS HIS TIME WITH THE SECRETARY WILL BE BRIEF, WE BELIEVE IT IS UNLIKELY HE WILL BRING UP ANY ISSUE OTHER THAN BELIZE. HOWEVER, HE RECEIVED CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATION PAPER ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN GUATEMALA ON MARCH 4, AND GOG MIGHT BELIEVE THIS IDEAL OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND. IF SO, WE BELIEVE MOLINA WILL REFLECT MILD DISTRESS AT NECESSITY OF THIS PROCEDURE AND CONVEY ASSURANCES THAT GUATEMALA IS DOING EVERYTHING IT CAN IN VIEW OF CONTINUING INSURGENCY TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS.

B. SUGGESTED RESPONSE: CONGRESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS REFLECT DEEP PUBLIC CONCERN THAT IS FULLY SHARED BY EXECUTIVE AND WILL NOT GO AWAY. IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ASSURE CONTINUED MILITARY AND EVENTUALLY ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES WHERE GROSS VIOLATIONS OCCUR, EVEN WHERE THERE ARE EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

4. A. FLOMERCA. GUATEMALA'S SMALL GOVERNMENT-OWNED SHIPPING LINE HAS GIVEN ITS NAME TO A DISPUTE WHICH IS ACTUALLY BETWEEN GOG AND FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION, WHICH HAS RECEIVED COMPLAINTS FROM AMERICAN LINES THAT GOG DISCRIMINATES IN FAVOR OF FLOMERCA. WHILE FOREIGN MINISTER HAS RARELY GOTTEN INVOLVED IN THIS SUBJECT, CONFIDENTIAL

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FACT THAT A GUATEMALAN DELEGATION WILL BE IN WASHINGTON MARCH 8 TO MEET WITH FMC STAFF COULD CAUSE HIM TO REFER TO GOG'S HOPE THAT SANCTIONS WILL NOT BE INVOKED BY FMC WITHOUT GIVING GUATEMALA TIME TO WORK OUT A SOLUTION.

B. SUGGESTED RESPONSE: FMC HAS BEEN QUITE REASONABLE IN ITS HANDLING OF GUATEMALAN PROBLEM AND WE ARE SURE IT WILL CONTINUE TO BE. HOWEVER, PROBLEM WILL RECUR AS LONG AS GUATEMALAN LAW, WHICH SEEMS DISCRIMINATORY ON ITS FACE, REMAINS UNCHANGED. BOSTER

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